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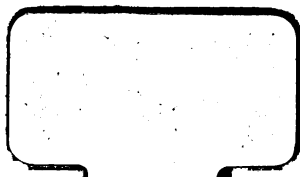
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Sept

Errors indeed!

No 1 727

THE
ERRORS OF ECSTASIE:

A DRAMATIC POEM.

WITH
OTHER PIECES.

BY GEORGE DARLEY.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR G. AND W. B. WHITTAKER,
AVE-MARIA-LANE.

1822.



LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

TO
MRS. N. COLTHURST,
ACCORDING TO PROMISE,
THIS POEM
IS INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

THIS little work needs little introduction. Poetry is of such a nature, that if not intrinsically good, no local or otherwise relative circumstances can possibly avail it. A history, or a science, may possess external recommendations to favour, independent of its absolute merits as a composition; poetry must recommend itself, by itself. Nothing, therefore, remains for me to say on the quality of my work. It would be useless to praise, and sure the world will not ask me to point out its errors? If it shall be found meritorious, the candour of the age is such as to ensure me a due proportion of applause; if otherwise, I know not what I should say to wring that from the benevolence of my readers, which their judgment refuses to allow.

I am aware that it is usual with authors to endeavour by numberless excuses to extenuate the imperfections of their works. I wish I had such to offer, but in truth I have none. Except that necessity of error which is the common lot of humanity, I have nothing to urge in my excuse, and to offer that would be superfluous.

My sole office, therefore, is to present my work, at the tribunal of the public, for judgment; which I do without one supplication for indulgence. Not that I defy criticism; but I do not deprecate it. I do not deprecate it, not because I am careless of it, but because I write for that, which if denied me on the score of merit, it is impossible I should ever receive in the way of a charity. If it were possible that critics could be merciful, and that my supplications could obtain indulgence from them, what would it profit me? I should be as distant from the object of my ambition, as if they had condemned me without pity. Justice would quickly tear those laurels from my brow, which Partiality had granted.

My avowal that I write from ambitious motives, might seem the offspring of presumption; it is not so. I am too well aware of the frequent deceptions put upon themselves by authors, to feel any thing like confidence; I tremble whilst I turn to the star which attracts me, but though I tremble, I still turn. The love of fame, under due restrictions, is not a dishonourable principle, nay, it is the most efficacious as well as the most general cause of honourable exertion.

To those whom the singularity of some parts of the principal piece in this collection may possibly displease, I would beg leave to observe, that they must have sadly miscalculated in expecting a poem with such a title as mine, to be free from errors of this description. My excuse is written in the very title-page of my work; it were surely vain to expect nothing dissonant from reason, in "The Errors of Ecstasie."

THE
ERRORS OF ECSTASIE.

Fie! on sinful Fantasie.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE ERRORS OF ECSTASIE.

SCENE—*A Woodland by Moonlight.*

A distant bell sounds, and ceases.

Enter MYSTIC.

MYSTIC.

Ay——Peaceful!——Still!——

The sullen acclamation of the time
Yon Moon ascended to her midnight throne,
Hath died upon the gentle pulse of night;
And borne amid the thronging courts of Heav'n,
Where lessening stars grow pale before the Queen,
Their saffron cheeks turn'd to cinereous white,
She rules supreme o'er all their singular fires.
High and sublime the radiant Empress treads

Her nightly bourne. With step too light to print
The starry wilderness, and far too soft
To wake rude clamour i' the tender air
Impress'd, she fleets in silent glory on,
Whilst the mute Heav'ns are hush'd beneath her foot,
And drowsy earth fore-plays the final doom.

'Tis a brave scene to fill a poet's eye.
Look how yon lordly pile of granite stands!
Heaving his monstrous shoulders at the moon,
Which she, the pale and melancholy Queen,
Smiling at earthly pride, scatters with tears
Of light; and shedding her unequal'd gems,
In barren flow'rs to ope their starry eyes,
She leads the blaze down from the mountain-side
To the broad lake; where shines a second Moon,
The formal mimic of her symmetry;
More than her image; lesser than herself;
Real apparency, acting up to life;
Each fleeting passion, answering to the time

The sympathetic spectre in the flood—
Smiles as she smiles, and saddens as she frowns.

A double moon! and double every spark
That burns the out-blown curtain of the sky!
Methinks, one now might leap into the moon,
And scan the headlong altitude o' th' air,
Through the bright bosom of this hollow flood,
Where counterfeited heav'n looks blue and clear,
In the reflective mirror of its breast.

Hush! hush! speak low—we'll rouse the buried world—
How deep this total falling off from life!
No vital respiration shakes the air,
To tell suspensive wonder 'tis deceived;
No motion marks the bare similitude
Of sleep to death; nor fancy turns, to truth;
But imitation drugs the visual sense
Up to diseased credulity, to think
That what it seems, it is. No forest nods,
Nor flower winks at the moon; but cold and still,

The slumb'rous landscape, shrouded in the pale
And sheeted volume, sinks in visible death.

Through dusky glens now peeps the zenith Queen,
Raining her light upon the glittering turf;
White hoods are thick upon the dale; the fir
Lights all its prickly spires; and the tall reeds,
Sharpen'd with visionary cusps of steel,
In scatter'd groups, gleam down the silver vales.

Hist!—not a sound—the dead sleep not as sure.—
Ev'n tremulous herbs that sigh'd in summer gales,
And bow'd to every breeze that crept the lea,
Grow stark—and through their indulcedinous leaves
The clear wind sweeps in silent passage by,
Nor dares to ruffle the light thistle-down,
The sear moss, nor the flimsy gossamer;
Or meeting with some arrogant promontory,
Some resty pine, the cradle of the blast,
That erst might waken its tempestuous breath,
And with contending and alternate arms,

Which borrow their behaviour from the winds,
Nurse up a violent and racking storm—
The crouching breeze its dreadful anger hides,
And scarce constrain'd to smother sweet revenge,
Breathes a low murmur, and then dies away.

Such is the sovereign stillness of the time!
Such is the grand ovation of the Moon!
Her footsteps strown with heaps of glittering flowers,
She walks beneath the sublime arch o' the world,
In calm, and bright, and deep serenity.

The curtain's fall'n; the busy scene is done;
Actors and audience quit the tiresome play;
And life's sad pageantry forgets to move.
Silence and vacancy possess the stage;
Peace and Tranquillity sit mute around.

Why then, when all is still, wilt thou not rest,
My soul, and drink th' oblivion of the scene?

Is't not the type of man's eternal state?
The symbol of futurity—that safe retreat,
Which pitiful Mercy gave for all our woes?
Why then not taste anticipative joy?

Joy!—joy!—what joy?—Is joy, defect of woe,
Such as vacuity of sense affords?—
What joy—if sleep indeed be temporal death,
Its symbol and its type? Sleep is not joy!
'Tis impercipient! Certainly. Nor woe!
What is it then? Mental annihilation—
And death, its antitype, is nothing more.

Annihilation!—dark!—and everlasting!—
Why this were well! I could exchange for this.
O! how I long to throw this passion off!—
And what so prompt? so near? The pilfering breeze,
That robs the scented valley of its sweets,
And ravishes the poor, defenceless flowers,
Wing'd by velleity, can scarce o'ersweep

A few poor measures of the earth, in th' hour
'Tis swift'st; while I—by a little, little step,
And shrewd addition of the coffin-sheet,
To keep me from the shivering touch of earth,
Can pass—from world to world! This is most well.

To stand—thus pinion'd, on the outside brink
Of the fool's horror, the dull cave of death,
That hides away the fleering heav'ns—the gaze
Of pitiless-hearted pitiers;—to stand—
Loaden with weighty griefs and sallow cares,
Press'd by misfortunes innate and acquired,
And ere youth's rose hath summer'd on its stalk,
Turn'd to a wretched weed, wither'd and pale,
Stung by a venomous blast that bites my core,
Sickness—which binds me with an aching crown,
Encircling with its drowsy weight my head;
Last, Poverty, upon a carrion steed,
Cheering his bleak dogs, Hunger and Nakedness,
With slaughter-red mouths, and sharp remorseless fangs,

To tear my flesh, to strip my houseless form,
Lap my cold blood, and hunt me to my grave.—
To stand, I say—this world upon my back,
Galling my un-atlantic shoulders; these fell dogs
Close at my heels pursuing—and the next
Small fluxion of the longitude of time,
My burthen hurl'd, back to th' injurious skies,
My grim tormentors baffled in the teeth,
To rest in senseless quiet, joyless ease,
In the short compass that a corpse can measure,
Laid stretch'd upon th' eternal bed of silence,
Pent up in futile boards or chok'd with clay.
Excellent! Ha! ha! ha! ha!
I'll do't! I'll do't!——

——Why what a fool was I

To whine, and weep, and play with tribulation,
When th' cure lies in a phial or a pill!
Now, now ye hideous band, ye coward crew,
That bend your horrors on a wretch like me,

Where's your dominion now? your terrors where?
Down with that sceptre, thou tyrannic fool,
That sways it o'er my health! Stand back—stand back,
Yellow-eyed Melancholy and black Despair,
The gulf is at your foot! And thou, thin Poverty,
Charm off thy dogs, and pull thy courser's neck
Down to his knee! Insatiate! what? wilt follow me
From yon dread cliff that breaks the midway air
Into yon gorge? Perdition gapes beneath,
And stretches wider its immoderate jaws
For thee and these.

Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Have I appall'd thee, fiend?

Dar'st thou not follow me?

'Tis well! Begone!

There is your cease. There my redemption lies.
I'll leap't! though sooty hell should grin beneath,
Or thunder roll above, to shake the Mercy-seat!

Ha! what a chain was there! Hell—Thunder—God!—

Yes. God! God! The calculating atheist
Who reckons on the sleeping bolts of Heav'n,
Under the tremor of whose cloudy bed
Minor impiety doth walk unblasted,
Whispers "There is no God"—and trembles.
There is a God! This truth, the gilded heav'ns,
Where numberless immensurable bodies roll,
Systems on systems, universe on universe,
Each comprehending an ubiquity,
And all, swung round the centre of infinity
By the dread impulse of Omnipotence——
Omnipotence declare! This truth, dumb Earth
Speaks out! and Ocean, o'er its undulant flood,
O'er roaring eddies swallowing the mad billows,
And hollow rocks beaten with resonant echoes,
This truth—borne on the plural voice o' the waves—
Mountain-back'd Ocean, heaving to the shout,
Prolongs in doubling thunders round its vasty shores.

If, then, God is—and else, we, conscients, are not—
The question's double-tongued. First: are we sole

Proprietors of our lives, or debtors to His will?
Then: is futurity seen as a dark dream,
Barely a dream? or prescience of a truth?
This, this is the hinge of doubt. Decided—
The former falls to nought. For who can moot,
If we shall live hereafter, that we owe
God our determination? But if not,
Annihilation chops us from our bond,
Whether 'tis due to God, or to ourselves.

Futurity!—to live for ever—ay—
Why that were to be God! It cannot be.
The attributes of God are his alone,
And one, Eternity. It cannot be.
Yet—is not Reason one?—and we are rational!—
Certainly. 'Tis but equality in 's attributes,
Which is impartible to nothing second;
We may be both eternal, yet not equal
Ev'n in that quality—False!—false!—Eternities
Are infinite, and therefore not unequal—

Yet soft—Infinity's sophistical—
Eternity henceforward, cannot equal
That, and eternity behind. *That's* ours;
The sum of both is His—O! whither, whither,
Will metaphysic meditation lead me?
Perplexity! Confusion! Contradictions!
Doubts that would puzzle deity itself,
A Chaos in the intellectual world!

Ah! why is this? ah! wherefore—why is this?
If I am disregarded of sweet Charity,
If Heav'n has let me down the winds of Chance,
The rack and light leaf of its termagant blasts,
Whilst Mercy flies my deprecating arms,
And ruthless Pity laughs at all my tears;
Since Hope—who first my young ambition led,
Following with eager step her protean form
Through every permutation of variety—
Since Hope, ev'n Hope, deserts me, and recedes
Into the frail material of the air

Mid dying hues and melancholy signs,
With her last finger pointing to the grave——
Since thus I am—why should I be at all?
Why should I breathe superfluous existence?
And wherefore these indefinite terrors fling
O'er the sole act which can absolve me now?

I am the wretched'st thing beneath the moon!
O! hast thou no quiescent for the mind?
Sweet Exorcist! thy bland rebuke, erewhile
Was wont to lay my rebel spirits deep
I' the liquid o' thy vast diffusion!
Come! I will gaze my state into a dream.

I seem like one lost in a deep blue sea,
Down, down beneath the billows many a mile,
Where nought of their loud eloquence is heard,
Save a dead murmur of the rushing waves
Fleeting above, more silent than no sound.
Over my head, as high as to the moon,

The tall, insuperable waters rise,
Pure and translucent; through whose total depth
The imminent stars shoot unrefracted rays,
And whiten all the bottom of the flood.
The sea-bed hath a scenery of its own,
And nought less wondrous than the realms of air :
Hills, dells, rocks, groves, sea-flow'rs, and sedgy caves,
In crystal armour lock'd—scatter'd around !
Here, like a mortal tenant of the sea,
Or fabulous merman, hermit o' the wave,
I stand, the sad surveyor of the scene,
Alone, amid the deserts of the deep.—

Hist!—Ocean hath no sadness equal this ;
It calls me up to life—— [A nightingale sings.

O God! O God! Such notes might turn to tears
Promethean eyes of clay——O piteous! piteous!
[Weeps.

Soft!—Dead again—then Music's i' the grave!

Like a nocturnal requiem it hath pass'd,
 Or spiritual adoration of the Moon.
 Let me take up the melancholy strain
 Of worship, which th' harmonious bird hath left;
 Sweet! shall I be thy nightingale,
 Weetless albeit of melody so rare?
 Come now! I'll woo thee in such latter strains,
 Thine own Endymion could not wake before.

Nymph o' the lily brow! on whose pale cheek
 Th' unrighteous rose——

MOON.

Endymion! .

MYSTIC.

Ha!—Did'st call?—

Who? who?——

Some voice!—some melancholy voice!—

An angel sings i' the Moon!——

'St! 'st!——

No more.——

Is 't possible?—

No, no.—Plato's a dreamer!—no—

What then?—

Are trees grown vocative, or do the reeds

Publish the secret whispers of the breeze

So verbally?—

O—'twas but Memory

Re-echoing through the chambers of the brain

My own late words.—

The woodland's lock'd in sleep.—

Or if ought breaks the universal quiet,

'Tis when the mutable and soft-wing'd palms,

Grown pendulous with the silvery breath o' the moon,

Trickle from leaf to leaf.—

Perchance 'tis now,

Those dubious voices o' the canorous vault,

Perishing in their softness—come; they, who

Tuning seraphic viols undefined,

Sing nightly i' th' involuntary air?

No, no—their music hath no syllables;

Dumb sweetness, without sense; mere euphony;
 Articulation swims upon the ear,
 Touching but not impressing; as the light
 Silk feather doth the wave.——

'Twas fancy—ay——

Nothing but fancy—fancy—fancy—ay.——

MOON.

My nightingale!

MYSTIC.

I dream! I dream!

MOON.

No dream

Had ever such coherency, to make
 The visionary sleeper lend his ear
 To phantom whisp'ers, fleeting ere they tell
 Their endless stories out.
 Art thou not he, by name implicative
 Mystic, the darkly-thinking son of Mystery?

MYSTIC.

Here!——

I am call'd!—and by 'a sound
Of more immediate excitation
Than the pungent'st "Hail"
Ere breath'd by mortal man.—

Yes—yes, dread summoner!

I have heard of this.—

They say, when the vex'd spirit hath fulfill'd
The utmost plenitude of human woe,
The Heav'ns in pity oft revoke their gift,
And send their repetition by the breath
Of airy-footed messengers.
It chimes well with my first purpose
Changed through terrors; now
Uncertainty's made certain.

I render me, angelical!

MOON.

Enthusiast!

Wilt listen to me? say?

MYSTIC.

Sweet sound! sweet sound!
 Listen? O! ay,
 If ecstasie will down.
 Listen? Such notes,
 So melancholy, grand,
 'Tween dirge and anthem, play
 When all the heav'nly minstrels do attend
 The burial of an angel!

MOON.

O—thy fantasie, thy fantasie indeed
 Takes liberty beyond all bourne of licence.

MYSTIC.

Sweet seraph! Charm my soul
 Out through the latent channels of mine ear.
 'Twill follow fascination such as this,
 Up to the top of infinite altitude.

MOON.

Still

Thou deal'st in wild transcendencies of leave.

But come! Wilt answer without parody
Of poetry; itself a parody
Of plain propriety?

MYSTIC.

Gordius, bind my tongue from slipp'riness!
Come on, sweet Spirit! Come!
Thou tremulant dictator o' sweet syllables!
Hosann'er!

MOON.

Poor errant worm! that sparklest i' the dusk
Of a most gloomy vale;
What dost thou here, amid th' unwholesome damps
O' the breathing earth?

MYSTIC.

'Tis as I feign'd.
Thou fair Attraction, take me to thy sphere,
Where sages say most blessed spirits dwell;
This dark, material world is all too rough,
Too full o' painful ways and ruggedness,
For tender-natured souls.

MOON.

Seek not to lay
The accusation of thine own neglect
In mastering passions much o'er-sensitive,
To guiltless things.
The wailing reed that blows i' the gusty vale,
Sighs not more piteously, than thou
At every breath of woe.

MYSTIC.

Ev'n thus.
Yet say, thou bright Communicant!
Whose spacious path doth span this circular air,
Doth not thine eye, though haply circumscribed
By partial vision, yet brim o'er with tears,
At sight of this most miserable world?

MOON.

Alas! alas! Mine eye hath oft been dimm'd
Indeed, with lamentable drops. I've seen
Such piteous acts, that I have sought to veil,
And blest the dark transgression of the clouds

Which hid me from such woes.

Partial! Oh, no!

Mine eye hath seen too much.

I deck the pall,

Which Night spreads over many a tombless corse,
Stretch'd on the desert sands, or distant shores,
With all my best of brightness.

O, I weep,

Weep ev'n to dissolution, when I see
Wand'ring near some lone monument, far, far
From his poor maiden, her dear lover lorn;
(My memory wears the scarf of sorrow yet,
And paints in tears his image on my brain;)
Down sits he on th' uncomfortable stone,
His breast uncased to th' acrimonious winds,
Thinking on her he loves; speaks not, but sits
Filling his gentle bosom with his tears;
Kisses the wind that seems to blow to home,
Loads it, a faithless messenger, with sighs;
Then looks he in my face, endeavouring

To catch some false resemblance of his love—
I smile, he sighs; I brighten, and he droops;
Then, hopeless, heartless, bitterly lies down,
And all his burial lamentations are my tears.

Each hour I mourn some wretchedness like this.—
Mercy!——

Ev'n now amid th' Italian wave
There plunged a reckless, white-invested thing!—
She sinks—alas!—and o'er, the heedless waves
Roll silently; now—now again she floats——
But stretch'd and senseless, like a sheet of foam,
And screaming sea-fowl pluck her dainty form.

MYSTIC.

O misery! O misery!

MOON.

But yet I deem those most notorious deeds
Spring rather from th' uncircumscribéd range
Of individual passion; thine own woes
Seem but th' effect of voluntary fault,

Neglecting thy more active energies,
Which fill the cup and spread the board of life,
To follow vain, seductive Meditation.

MYSTIC.

The Heav'ns have cursed me with a poet's eye!
An ear that will find audience for sweet sounds
Though the soul pay in sad, compensate tears;
The portion of divinity within
(If such it be, by dark prescription old)
Much turn'd to contemplative sadness; which
Can find a further to most thoughts, and views
All, through the dark glass of its melancholy.

I'm framed, the fool of Sensibility!
I cannot see a young flow'r i' the grass
Smile at my foot which kills it in its prime,
And yet not think of undeserv'd death;
I cannot look ascaunt the mighty deep,
Shaking the firm strand with its plangent waves,
And cry, "'tis good in faith," or "sooth 'tis fair,"

But my whole spirit rushes through my eyes,
And mingles with the motion of the flood,
The blind tumultuations of the main;
Nor yet subsides, with the subsiding sea,
But tasks invention to out-measure nature,
And puts imagination to the stretch
In framing vast ideas of the Deluge.

MOON.

Ay! there the error cries
Like to the blood of Abel, from the ground,
For Heav'n to punish him who gave it out.

MYSTIC.

Veil'd spirit! must I then untune my soul,
Or make it vibrate with unnatural pulse?
What! shall I tell the nightingale, "Be dumb!
Thou speak'st not sweeter language than the jay,
Or any other ruffian-throated bird
Which strangles sound in noise?"
Shall I apostrophize the busy stream,
That, quarrelling with its testy pebbles, brings

Such liquid modulations out of stones
As might ashame the lutes of seraphim,
With "Cease, thou babbler! Prithee, grate no more
Upon thy file-fraught bed; the stridulous saw
Shatters the ear with lesser dissonance?"

MOON.

Ah! thou fantastical!

MYSTIC.

No——let the Heav'ns, which gave me constitution
As passible as dust or fluency,
Answer its evil tendency; not I.
I cannot shut my senses if I would;
And when sense feels, reflection comes perforce,
For sense is but the motive of the mind.

MOON.

Thou o'er-contemplative!
Lost in a labyrinth of Ecstasie,
More intricate and perilous to the mind,
To 'scape its mesh, than Crete's was to the body.
Ecstasie, rash production of the thoughts

To what right sanity would never lead,
Doth spread a dark confusion o'er the brain
Of false creations, wild and fabulous,
Vain dreams, perplexities inexplicable,
Misty conceits, and phantom imagery ;
From one poor thought, conjures a host of forms,
Irrelevancies sur-exaggerates,
And lost in such fantastic combinations,
Differs from madness scarcely by a line.

MYSTIC.

Fair monitress ! is Genius nothing more ?
Yet Genius is exalted feeling——

MOON.

Yes,

Exalted, but not sightless.
Builds not presumptuous Babels, out of size,
Till reason topple down. Seeks not, to climb
The unraught heav'n of infinite Conception
Intangible, like Titan's phrenetic son,
Piled mountain tottering on unstable hill,

The site of eminent Jove; the fable's pat
 For those who will to profit, and apply
 Its moral to the brain.

There is a scale
 Of intellectual feeling, *graduate*
 Through indivisible and invisible parts,
 Each different yet partaking of the next,
 From apathetic dulness to insanity;
 The common-sense o' th' world poaches i' th' former,
 But Ecstasie's near neighbour to the last;
 Genius, or Fancy its more passionate name,
 Lies equally between. Here, thou'st transgress'd;
 And, here transgressing, thou dost pay the penalty:
 Dulness itself is happier than thou.

MYSTIC.

Why then I'll pray the Heav'ns to strike me surd!
 To paralyze the tetchy nerves o' the brain,
 Dry up the tubes and organs of sensation,
 And turn my heart to preferable stone!
 I'll rob the ditch-roots of their lazy pith;

The green ores of their nocuous potency,
Mix the narcotic juices for a drink,
To kill the fine vibrations of the brain,
And dull the vigilant sense to lethargy;
I'll rid their keen perceptions from each nerve,
Choke up their pores with unctuous pharmacies,
Grow fat and fatuate, heart-less and heart-free!
Since to be dull is surely to be happy.

MOON.

Still in extremes!

MYSTIC.

Hear me, sweet Spirit!

Though I stand
A pensive, poor, and visionary boy,
With bloodless cheek, in shudd'ring attitude,
The bitter salutation of the night,
Thus; like a rigid statue—or, more like,
A living representative of stone,
A wretched mockery of the human form,
Wishing for some impetuous thunderbolt

To scatter me beyond the ken of God,
Beyond the hope or pow'r of resurrection,
The chance of future bliss appropriate,
I would not change the temper of my blood
For that which stagnates in an idiot's veins,
To gain the sad salvation of a fool.

MOON.

Thou wilful, passionate, and eccentric boy!
With faculties, if well applied, sufficient
To make ev'n thy most sensitive nature happy,
Yet by perverse and wilful overdoings,
Turning thy gifts to utter damnatives.
How in thy "metaphysic meditations,"
Thy shrewd refinements on Eternal Justice,
And holding subtle commune with thy thoughts
On death, futurity, annihilation,
How hast thou 'scaped from stumbling on this truth,
A by-word with the most unthinking clowns,
EXTREMES ARE EVER WRONG?

Is't wise,

When Winter pinches with too sharp a nail,
And binds the sinews in its rigorous grasp,
To forthwith tread the metal of a furnace?
Doth it become the counsel of a fool,
Or headlong petulance of infancy,
When Summer kisses with a strumpet's lip,
And shoots intemperate ardour through the veins,
To plunge in Cydnus' floods incontinent,
And cure by deadly contrariety?
Wouldst thou not call a very dog unwise,
Who thus could shame mere instinct by such folly?
Speak! answer!

MYSTIC.

Lose my blushes in thy pale.

MOON.

Is there no mean, no golden mean of action,
Which kept, leads on to happiness and joy?
Are you not made with Passions and with Reason,
One to incite, the other to restrain,
And both necessitous to ordinate Liberty?

D

If Man was nought but mortal mechanism,
Turn'd at the will and pleasure of the artist,
Where lies his liberty? If he was left
To the rough domination of his passions,
What would the emblem of its spirit be?

Go stand upon the turbid water's edge,
And view the hideous figure in the stream
Made by its quivering mirror. Obvious starts
A horrid face, in shadowy channels torn;
Its flickering features, varying types of fiends,
Work through the several fashions of deform;
The hair flies tortuous, like a knot of snakes
In restless agitation of their kind;
Whilst the drawn optics, darting oblique flames,
Fright the abused spectator from the scene.

O! how unlike, the beauteous image smiles,
In yon pure, motionless, and peaceful lake!

This, is the model of a healthful mind ;
That, the less terrible spectre of th' insane.

But wherefore seek for parables abroad,
When the reality is found at home ?
Look at thyself, the plaything of thy Will,
Mad in thy ecstasies, a fool in tenderness,
Fantastical beyond all reach of rule,
Romantic ev'n to very girlishness,
And impious too, in spite of " Meditation ;"
Giving to Passion such imperial sway,
As turns thy Reason's sceptre to a straw,
And makes him the dishonour'd satellite of Fancy.
Hence comes thy misery. Answer, if you can.

MYSTIC.

Confession takes the best half of my words.
My sorrows are my sins. I've oped my breast
Unheedingly to Virtue's combatants,
Ransom'd my feelings at the price of Reason,
To Vice betray'd the bulwarks of my rest,

Heav'n leaves the citadel it cannot save,
And Hell lets loose its minions to destroy.

MOON.

Not so, not so. Thou art not just the fiend
Thy own, yet hyper-ordinate Fancy, makes thee.
Thy passions may be evil in degree,
And yet not so in very quality.
A Poet (thus, for comfort, let me call thee,)
Is never such a devilish friend to vice,
Mistaken, but not utterly malignant.
Neither will Heav'n desert him at the need.

MYSTIC.

Dear inspiration of my better thoughts!
Is't not desertion, total casting-off,
When I am thus a debtor to such shreds
For covering, that the shroud looks comfortable?
When the crackling skin scarce keeps the skeleton,
And the famish'd blood grows thin and ichorous?
When the rootless hair drops from the skull——
Look here!——

Give me a dart and grave-cloth in my hand,
 For I am Death's pale vicar upon earth!
 Methinks this dell's a mighty sepulchre,
 And I the grim memento i' the midst;
 Yon moon hath come to light the general vault,
 Whilst miserable torches gleam on high;
 The dead sleep fast below——

MOON.

Now this is Ecstasie,
 Not wise——

MYSTIC.

Ah! villanous—damn'd—Satanic error!
 Yes! But I'll curb this hellish spirit, till
 It rides i' the ring, strait——

Moloch gorge me else!
 Yet say, dark Brightness! in mere, répent prose,
 Must not Heav'n alienate the hearts of men,
 When Charity apostatizes thus,
 To pamper knavery in the common streets,
 Whilst real Misery hides?

MOON.

Didst thou not quit,
Most rash, most unadviséd, and most vain,
No proferable cause asserted why,
The track which sober Wisdom pointed out,
And plain Experience 'stablish'd as the true,
Th' ascent to riches, happiness, and fame,
Didst thou not barter Science for a song?
Thy gown of Learning for a sorry mantle?
The student's quiet for the city's din?
At once—thy social duty, to assist
By rational pursuits, the common good,
Bound in thine own—for selfish Fantasie
Useless to others, fatal to thyself?

If this thou didst, why slander Providence?
Is Heav'n obliged to pander to thy faults?
You have deserted Heav'n; *you* sought for Woe;
Bit by vermicular Ambition, *you*——
You——with the grub of Poesy in your brain,

Citing you on with insane avarous tooth
To sate cupiety of praise—you left yourself;
Or in thy own mad, monster-making language,
You left Philosophy i' the mire; dismiss'd
Prudence, to keep companions with the dull;
Leagued with Ambition, Poetry, and Pain;
Chose Misery out of hell, and call'd him Brother.

MYSTIC.

Bright Truth! I grew aweary of the dull,
Undeviating, dusty road of Science,
Vacant o' beauty, barren o' sweetness;
I thought—deceptible, ah! too deceptible—
The true Elysium lay within the mind
Fill'd with th' amaranthian flow'rs of Fantasie
O! couldst thou feel, as Poets only feel,
In such retreat of spirit from the body,
Thou 'dst spurn a habitation in the sky,
To share beatitude beyond divine!

MOON.

What! and pay Poet's price, in consequence?

MYSTIC.

There lies the Heathen's Shadowy Vale of Bliss!

There fiction turns to authenticity!

Eternal murmuring of soft hidden rills,

Eternal low susurring of warm winds

Puffling amid the flow'ry-finger'd groves,

Sound in the deeply-listening ear of Fancy;

Eternal viridant vesture i' the fields,

Eternal bloom of bright-complexion'd flow'rs

Breathing their souls of fragrancy around,

Fill the capacious measure of an eye,

Companion to th' imaginative soul.

These are the dear creations of the brain,

Which copy in mere thought substantial things,

And stand most credibly for all their joys;

Till stern Reality returns again

Ev'n in the very summit of belief,

Bursts the poor veil of fond forgetfulness,

And with its cruel dissipation

Scatters the lovely dream.

Thus am I sadly, sadly undeceived.

MOON.

Too late, too late for preterite occasion!
Thy Fortune's past amid thy sleep of Reason.
But yet, droop not, Young Latter-Love of mine!
(For I am not so heedless of sweet praise
Ev'n in my eminent divinity,
But I could list thy amorous adoration
Of this pale cheek, and thy most legal scorn
Of that same strumpet-flow'r, "th' unrighteous rose,"
Whose bloom I love not. At thy plaintive call
Wept in such winning breath, I bow'd and came.)

Though present life afford no chance of joy,
This be thy consolation and thy hope:
HEAVEN'S DOORS STAND OPEN FOR THE MISERABLE,
MERCY SHALL REIGN, AND JUSTICE SHALL BE DONE!

No more! My words are past, my lips are seal'd.

MYSTIC.

Not thus! not thus! Ah! do not leave me thus.

MOON.

See'st thou not yon red cloud upon thy plane,
Just in the eye o' th' east? The van of day
Burns on its brow. Th' ascension's in its prime,
And soon shall see my fall. I fade! I fade!

MYSTIC.

O stay!—one moment yet——O render me
One poor response——

MOON.

Haste then. I fade! I fade!

The flow'rets are rathe risers; curious ears——
I would not have them blow my words adown
Th' intelligent, tell-tale winds awaken'd.

Yare!

MYSTIC.

Pale Sister of the flagrant God of Day!
More sweet than that intemperate Lord of Fire,
Shaking redundant radiance from his hair!

Say, shall I die, when I do die? Shall Fame
Breathe no proud anthem over me?

MOON.

Farewell!

I must not speak—Morn comes—Earth wakes—Farewell!

MYSTIC.

Ah! yet—ah! cruel—say——

MOON.

Farewell! Farewell!

MYSTIC.

One word! one little word! ah! say——

MOON.

Farewell!

• • • • • • •
• • •

N O T E S.

Note 1, page 12, line 19.

If, then, God is—and else, we, conscients, are not.

The metaphysical proof of the existence of a God, is drawn from our consciousness of our own existence. We are conscious that we exist ourselves; and as, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, we must have proceeded from, or been created by, something antecedent to, and (our powers not extending to self-creation) more powerful than ourselves. Whether this antecedent something be Omnipotence, or only a being somewhat superior to us, is immaterial; for, even in the latter case, this immediately antecedent being, must have had its superior antecedent; and so on there will be a series of beings, ascending in the scale of power from our finite faculties, to Omnipotence. No apology is necessary for the introduction of this subject here, as the above reasoning is not only requisite for the due understanding of the line, but is an easy and conclusive proof of the greatest natural truth we are capable of knowing, and as such can never be out of place. In mooted the point, whether suicide may be committed with impunity or not, Mystic naturally falls upon the question of the existence of a God, who may punish, and the existence of a Future State, where that punishment may follow.

Note 2, page 13, lines 18 and 19.

Eternities

Are infinite, and therefore not unequal.

It is to be understood, that Mystic is not intended for a strict logician or accurate reasoner ; if we can make him a Poet, it is quite as much as the reader has a right to expect. It may also be observed, that, beside his own confession in the next line, of the fallaciousness and sophistry, to which all arguments drawn from our idea of Infinity are liable, he here compares the eternity of God, and ours in a future state, with respect to *duration* ; whilst the true circumstance in which the inferiority of the latter consists, is, its being eternity *ab extra*, and not eternity *per se*, as with the Deity. Even though we should live for ever, it is nevertheless only by the sufferance of the Deity, who is himself (perhaps involuntarily) eternal in himself. But enthusiasm is a fruitful source of error.

Note 3, page 18, line 2.

Plato's a dreamer.

The Music of the Spheres was a favourite doctrine of the ancient philosophers, especially of Plato.

Note 4, page 26, lines 7 and 8.

The portion of divinity within,

(If such it be, by dark prescription old).

The opinion that our souls are portions of the Divine Mind is obscurely hinted by philosophers of all ages. Even the writer of the book of Genesis seems to insinuate it, by the words " and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul."

Note 5, page 32, line 3.

The chance of future bliss appropriate.

That there are separate states of future bliss, of divers descriptions and intensities, each being exactly appropriated to the deserts and necessities of the souls therein, so that every one may enjoy that species and degree of happiness, to which his faculties and merits are justly proportional, is not among the most fantastical visions of Mystic. It is an opinion consonant alike with reason and religion, though perhaps impossible, and certainly immaterial, to be decided upon by us.

Mystic's scepticism on the subject of the Resurrection, is a natural consequence of his doubt as to the possibility of a future state. This is one of the many ERRORS into which an enthusiastic spirit may lead us. Those who are more occupied with their own fantasies and hyperbolical imaginations, than with the legitimate conclusions of reasoning, become attached to any wild theory or hypothesis which suits their disposition, and neglect or perhaps are unable to perceive the force of the arguments on which the most probable doctrine depends. Thus, in the present age, no man but a poet and enthusiast, could possibly advocate such a monstrous doctrine as that of annihilation.

Note 6, page 33, line 8.

To plunge in Cydnus' floods.

Cydnus was the ancient name of a river in Cilicia, and was celebrated for the extreme coldness of its waters. Alexander the Great, who was remarkable for impetuosity of character, contracted a severe illness by plunging, when overheated, into this stream. The adventure is familiar to most readers.

Note 7, page 38, line 1.

Didst thou not quit.

Since the time of Rousseau, it has been the tendency of imaginative writers to embody their own history in their works, from whence has arisen the tendency of readers to identify an author with some of his characters, or at least, to investigate the incidents of his life from the data given in his writings. As far as regards the present work, it may be well to observe, that the character of Mystic, and his situation in general, is much more a creation of the imagination, than the resemblance or history of any one really existing. There are certainly some incidents taken from real life, but they are so few in proportion to the fictitious ones, that it would be impossible to discover any similitude between the original and so very distant a copy, if it were even a matter of interest, instead of being, as it is, wholly immaterial.



P O E M S.

AROUND this naked brow of mine
No laurels in close chaplet lie,
Parnassus laughs with all his flow'rs
At such a tuneless Bard as I.
For me, no vagrant blossom dares
Slily to cheat the vigil Nine,
But jeer and flout my steps assail—
Yet will I sing of Love and Wine.

Come! let the plunder'd rose look pale,
Whilst Halcyone's cheek its colour wears,
Fast let the brimming charger pour,
And stain my bowl with sanguine tears.

Thus whilst I drain the gold-mouth'd cup,
And press its blazing lip to mine,
Challenged by love-appellant eyes,
I'll sing the joys of Love and Wine.

LET THE BEAKER STAND!

LET the beaker stand!—My blood's in flames!
Fed by th' ethereal spirit of the vine,
No more!—I have sprung where Genius claims
Dominion next to prophecy,
Where souls of inspired Bards do hie;
But nought beyond that latter cup, which made this
glory mine,
Belongs unto the Nine,
I'll quaff a softer, lovelier juice—there's madness in the
wine!

Bind me a wreath, my blooming boy!
Of crimson buds, and Venus' lovely tree,
Of snow-capt lilies, bursting into joy,
At twining blood-roses and myrtles for me.
Spread me a couch too, and spread it of sweet flowers,
Spread me it broad, that the Nymph may recline;
Yet blush not, ye roses, though, mid these dark bowers,
She dare, e'en to press her dewy lip to mine.

Love is the breath that blest Saints sigh,
On am'ranth beds, the heav'nly streams among,
Yet nought unholy's whisper'd i' the sky,
Though flow'rs grew, expressive, or streams found a
tongue.
Spread me a couch then, and spread it of sweet flowers,
Spread me it broad, that the Nymph may recline;
Yet droop not, ye lilies, though, mid these dark bowers,
She dare, e'en to press her downy cheek to mine.

Hark!—in the boughs, the wind-lyre sings
Of broken hearts—its voice is lovers' sighs;
And ever as burst the sorrows of its strings,
A lost maid laments! or a luckless lover dies.
Spread me a couch then, and spread it of sweet flowers,
Spread me it broad, that the Nymph may recline;
Yet sigh not, sweet Æol, though, mid these dark bowers,
She dare, e'en to press her snowy breast to mine.

THOU HAST SLEPT, O LYRE!

TO MRS. —

THOU hast slept, O Lyre!
Yet the wild stream weepeth,
The wingéd hours away,
And the vale-flower under her bonnet peepeth,
To ensnare thy praise for her beauteous attire,
Sing again, sweet Lyre, I pray.

“ Let the blue rills mourn,
And the flowers cease wooing
My silent chords—in vain !
Their still soul wakes not to such petty suing,
But thy fingers along my strings shall burn,
If thou 'lt sing to thy Love again.”

My Love !—At thy pray'r,
Let the slumb'ring minions
Of lyral song arise !
And heav'n-born fame on angelical pinions,
Mounting the springy volumes of the air,
Tell her beauty to the skies !

In my breathing bow'rs,
Where the sighing willow,
And wild vine o'er my bed,
Shadowing mine own ambrosial pillow,
Shall lull thee with sighs o' murmuring flow'rs,
Sweet Lady, rest thy head.

Round the fragrant couch
Where thy dear form resteth,
Th' ensanguin'd flow'r shall lie,
And the dearest theme with which Heav'n investeth
A poet's soul, and a minstrel's touch,
My Lyre to thine ear shall sigh.

When my goblet foams
For thy lip to press it,
Bedew'd by breath of thine,
Reach me mine hallowéd bowl to kiss it,
Whilst o'er, the spirit of thy sweetness roams,
And to nectar turns the wine.

And oh! when I kneel
At thy bosom's altar,
Where heav'n's own incense lies,
When mine eye doth swim, and my tongue doth falter,
Seeking to tell what my pulse doth feel,
Shall my lip drink nought but sighs?

Ah me! if that breast
Might enthrone my slumbers,
Lull'd by thy voice divine,
My Lyre would forget her reckless numbers,
For such spell might charm to eternal rest
Souls, far less warm than mine.

But my laurel mourns,
And my Lyre sings, "Willow!"
The knell when love doth die;
For thy cheek doth press another's pillow,
And my soul for a second LAURA burns,
Though an humbler PETRARCH I.

THE REBELLION OF THE WATERS.

The Sea, in tremendous commotion, calls on its tributary streams for succour, whilst Triton blows his threatening conch in vain. Simois and Scamander, awake from their dream of ages, into pristine glory, and the floods subside not even at the rebuke of Neptune.

“ ARISE!—the Sea-god’s groaning shell
Cries madly from his breathless caves,
And staring rocks its echoes tell
Along the wild and shouting waves.
Arise! awake! ye other streams,
Than wear the plains of ruin’d Troy,
Ida’s dark sons, have burst their dreams,
And shake the very hills for joy.”

Press’d by the King of Tides, from far
With nostril split, and blood-shot eye,
The web-foot minions of his car
Shriek at the wave, they lighten by.

The noise of total hell was there,
As fled the rebel deeps along ;
A reckless, joyous prank they dare,
Though thunder fall from Neptune's tongue.

COME, AND SEE!

COME, and see !
Thou, who never think'st to find
Pleasure for the dainty eye
In rural scenery ;
Thought how false ! and eye how blind !
Come, and see ! — The hills, the woods,
The valleys, and the rolling floods,
“ Come, and see ! ” are all a-saying,
All be-word their pray'r, with praying
“ Come, and see !
Prithee, come, and see ! ”

Come, and see!

How the summer-valley lies,
Painted all in colours sheen,
Red, yellow, blue, and green,
With a thousand other dyes;
Where the little merry bee
Danceth to the minstrelsie
Of the meadow-bells a-ringing,
And be-words their song, with singing
“Come, and see!
Prithee, come, and see!”

Come, and see!

How the sleepy willows look
With their heads laid i' the stream,
Where silver minnows gleam,
Rowing up and down the brook;
Where the dank reed, river-born,
Blows its melancholy horn
To the whimperin' waves a-creeping,
And be-words their woe, with weeping

"Come, and see!

Prithee, come, and see!"

Come, and see!

How the sylvan feathers wave

On the cresty mountain-brow,

Now bending lowly, now

Rearing high their plumage brave;

Where the saucy ruffin' breeze

Pushes through the fretful trees

All in tumult wild a-flying,

And be-words their sigh, with sighing

"Come, and see!

Prithee, come, and see!"

Come, and see!

Such is rural beauty; such

Pleasure, to be found for you;

If then, this tale be true,

Couldst thou ever look too much?

Come, and see!—The hills, the woods,
The valleys, and the rolling floods,
“Come, and see!” are all a-saying,
And be-word their pray’r, with praying
“Come, and see!
Prithee, come, and see!”

TO A STREAM.

WHITHER, tell me, Stream!
Roll these idle rills,
Down the rocks where Echo lies,
From the bleeding hills:
Kissing ev’ry heedless flow’r
As it droops thy waters o’er,
With a liquid lip of foam?

" From the mountain urn
O'er the heath I go,
Where the wild linnet sings,
To the woods below.
O'er the meadow's golden dress,
Rover of the wilderness!
And the sleeping vales, I roam."

Wild and silly Stream!
Ere the wish be vain,
Turn to thy grassy spring,
Murmurer! again.
Tears, tears of sorrow deep
Rovers o'er their follies weep,
For a dear and distant home.

ON THE DEATH OF A RECLUSE.

Love droop'd when Beauty fled the bow'r,
And languid closed the day,
Wept ev'ry little flow'r,
And turn'd its head away.

The wind spoke with a fallen tongue,
The green reed sigh'd amain,
And sable forests swung
Rude melody again.

Wild caves rang deep, and rocks grew cold,
Whilst rivers wept by them,
All nature's death-bells toll'd
A requiem! a requiem!

Mid roaring brooks and dark moss-vales
Where speechless Thought abides,
Still her sweet spirit dwells,
That knew no world besides.

Her form, the woodland still retains—

Wound but a creeping flow'r,

Her very life-blood stains

Thee, in a falling show'r.

Touch but the stream, drink but the air,

Her cheek, her breath is known—

Ravish that red rose there,

And she is all thy own.

LOVERS' PIETY.

THE sullen, silent hour of pray'r

Sends many a wand'ring sigh to Heav'n,

From breasts that earth-enthralled are,

And aye to mortal angels giv'n.

With transient step, the murmurer roves

From hill to vale, from bell to blossom,

Then turns it to the Heav'n it loves—

A woman's lip! a woman's bosom!

THE ANSWER.

Heav'n's flow'rs are red an' rare,
Ev'ry sigh to heav'n-bed roamin'
Cowereth too contently there,
To think on sinfu' breast o' woman.

Woman's smile is chare enough,
And her kiss is not ungratefu',
But to sighs, so far aloof
From sin, must sure be very hatefu'.

EPIGRAM ON A LADY.

No longer shall Venus, as poets have told,
With Pallas in enmity be,
For later and better mythologists hold
That both are united in THEE.

THE BEE.

TO MRS. ———

The Bee is chidden, for that in his providence of the merely useful things of life, he hath neglected the pleasures thereof and its sweeter enjoyments. Whilst his brothers of the hive are abroad in the fields, engaged in the dearer office of collecting the treasures o' flowers, he, the Solitary, remaineth locked within his cell, employed in the toilsome and ungrateful duty of extruction. He is advised to quit that dull life, nor be so wholly studious as to neglect pleasure. Inducements are mentioned, and at the name of his favourite flower, the pale Sweet-pea, his bosom riseth, and he goeth forth singing and very loving. But he is rebuked in that this flower is in possession of another, and exhorted rather to return to his former obscurity, than follow such unholy loves.

From th' intricate, though gainful,

Thy wax-wrought knavery,

From sweetless and from painful,

Come forth, thou drowsy Bee.

Long season thou'st been rearing

Thy scientific bowers,

And o'er the future peering,

Forgat the present flowers.

Come, rouse thee from thy slumbers,
And shake thy trumpet-wing,
In small, sonorous numbers,
Thou tiny poet sing.

O'er od'rous bells and blossoms
See others how they hie,
And pillow'd by sweet bosoms,
They murmur as they lie.

The coronet fresh o' the fountain,
The lily i' the vale,
Queen daisy on her mountain,
And primrose prink-the-dale ;

The time's-scythe mocking myrtle,
The rose in blushes drest,
Like virgin without kirtle,
Laid in her lover's breast ;

Sweet-pea 'n pale pink—Thou minion!

Ay, now thy breast's on fire,
Thou spread'st thy flimsy pinion,
And wak'st thy meadow lyre.

Thou fool! will nought content thee

Less than such flow'r divine?
Repent ye, ah! repent ye,
Whilst yet the pow'r is thine.

What though aspirant Zephyrs,

On most Hyblæan wing,
With rival breaths, sweet favours
Into her bosom bring;

Her beauteous head reclining

Upon majestic stem,
Ambitious pale, entwining
Her floral diadem;

Though odours amaranthine,
Rapt from empyreal bow'rs,
Her slender limbs might grant thine,
The queen o' graceful flow'rs!

Yet see! churl coyness gathers,
Back! to thy cell again!
Her bosom is another's,
Thy song is all in vain.

TO THE SAME.

FOUND FAITHLESS.

THOU think'st I'll weep, thou think'st I'll sigh,
Thou think'st for thy false faith I'll die,
No, no—I've broke the spell;
But thou shalt weep, and thou shalt sigh,
And thou shalt live to wish to die,
And die to live in Hell!

THE FAIRY-SESSION.

ROUND the stem of a sleeping flower,
 Whilst the voice of the night was still,
Sat a synod of wondrous power,
 On the blades of a grassy hill.

There were fays of the river and fell,
 There were elves of the wood and glen,
There were spirits of the grot and cell,
 There were wraiths of the moor and fen.

The hymnal bands of the traceless tune,
 Heard i' the bosom of the sky,
And the riders of the radiant lune,
 On a down-beam, hither-borne, hie.

Some piped on tubes of invisible span,
Some wept o'er th' inaudible lyre,
And ever as the melody ran,
Rung the bells of the heav'nly quire.

And I heard down the willowy bourne,
Like th' echo of a broken dream,
A chant; as a wind-shook reed might mourn,
Or the song of a running stream.

FAIRIES ADDRESS TO THE MOON.

Listen, O moonbeam, listen!
To hollow reeds we fill,
And rest on this green bosom,
The sweetest of the hill.

Rest, rest, O rest, mountain flowers are dreaming,
And the dale-queens wink, i' the glittering blaze,
In silver veils o'er the red-rose streaming,
And bow'ring the blue-bell in a bright shade of rays.

These weepers, these weepers of the roral tear!

How can they weep for the Sun,

When their green robes sweetest and brightest appear,

And have such a livery on?

The gorgeous fount is a ring of light,

The river is a flood of beams,

And the woods as they shiver in the winds of night

Seem cover'd with a thousand streams.

The rushes start like icicles

Bright from the shining lake,

And each fond reed its pleasure tells

In whispers through the brake.

Hail then, fair fount of effluent light! Hail, hail!

Thou sun of night! thou glory of the sky!

White rose of Heaven! sweet Queen o' the blue-bosom'd

vale,

Where grow the pale star-flowers, and the long-hair'd

meteors fly!

Fly away, Moon!
Spirits, begone!
For the east begins to flare.
To the wood! to the glen!
To the moor! to the fen!
To the grot! to the river! to the air!

THE END.



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